

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF 2004 STATE OF MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNER DORRENE GILBERT, OF GRAND LEDGE, MI

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I rise today to recognize Dorrene Gilbert, whose generosity of spirit, intelligence, responsible citizenship, and capacity for human service has earned her the 2004 State of Michigan Volunteer Award.

Dorrene is an enthusiastic and energetic promoter of Grand Ledge, especially its historic and cultural projects. For forty years, she has notably spearheaded activities for the Grand Ledge Area Historical Society, the Art Guild, Ledge's Playhouse, Ledge Craft Lane, the Garden Club, Lincoln Brick Park, Michigan Week, and her church. Dorrene is extremely creative and well known for her cultural endeavors and bringing beauty to the community.

A founder of the Art Guild, Dorrene served as its president in the 1960s. She was Artist of the Month chairman for Ledge Craft Lane, a non-profit arts and crafts center, in the 1970s and still serves there as a volunteer. Known for her talent as a writer who has been publicity or promotion chairman for many groups in town, Dorrene has written and produced plays for church and for several style shows as fundraisers for the Opera House and Historical Society.

Having always been interested in gardens and nature, Dorrene has devoted a great deal of time and effort to the Garden Club and its projects. She has served as president twice, and program chairman many times, while remaining a long time geranium sale promoter and working on the gardens at the restored Opera House in downtown Grand Ledge. Dorrene has also been involved with the Memorial Tree Trail, where over 300 crab trees have been planted on the streets and in the parks in Grand Ledge in honor of or as memorials to residents.

When Dorrene's husband passed away, she decided that she wanted to do something special in his memory. She wanted to promote recreation and historical traditions at the Lincoln Brick Park, which, at the time, was just being developed. The Brick Factory on the park's grounds had been a part of his family's heritage. Working with the park staff, she helped develop the Ashley Gilbert Memorial Historical Trail. When her son passed away, Dorrene wanted to add something educational and beautiful to Lincoln Brick Park once again. The David Gilbert Memorial Sugar Bush, with 105 maples and dogwoods, was born from memorial funds, family contributions and a grant. She has also encouraged the Garden Club to plant at Lincoln Brick Park and is a

contributor and supporter of the Lincoln Brick 100 Club.

Furthermore, as a board member of the Grand Ledge Area Historical Society, Dorrene has chaired and presented several programs on the history of Grand Ledge over the years. She is currently planning a vintage clothing style show as a fundraiser for the Historical Society. Dorrene has also spearheaded Festive Tables at the Opera House during the Historical Society Annual Holiday Home Tour for several years. She has served her church as the Sunday School Superintendent, a Church Council Member, Fine Arts and Decoration Chairman, and often handles its publicity. Dorrene also wrote and produced a play on the 125 years of the church. She has served on Michigan Week Committees for nearly forty years as promotion and publicity chairman, hospitality chairman, and in recent years, on the Awards Committee. The list of her activities is vast, diverse, and always growing.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I join her many friends, admirers, fellow volunteers, and the people of Grand Ledge in extending our highest praise and congratulations to Dorrene Gilbert for winning the 2004 State of Michigan Volunteer Leadership Award. Her personal interest and active participation in her community are deeply appreciated and should serve as an example for us all.

TRIBUTE TO DR. MILLER WICK-LIFFE "WICK" LAWRENCE, JR.

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual from my district, Dr. Miller Wickliffe "Wick" Lawrence, Jr., who was just inducted post-mortem into the Corney Creek Hall of Fame. Dr. Wick's tireless service and genuine commitment to his patients, family and community were truly remarkable and inspiring.

Born in 1912 and raised in Bernice, Louisiana, he was a graduate of Bernice High School and Louisiana Tech University. While he aspired to a career in dentistry, the nation was suffering through the Depression, and his career was postponed while he taught chemistry at Bernice High School. In 1934, he enrolled in the Atlanta Southern Dental College, marrying Cortez Hicks along the way. Dr. Wick and his new bride returned to Bernice upon his graduation and he set up a practice, which he maintained for 40 years.

Dr. Wick served in the United States Army Dental Corp, enlisting at Fort Walters, Texas with assignments at Camp Livingston, Louisiana; Fort Lewis, Washington; Brigham City, Utah; Camp Beale, California and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He was honorably discharged in 1946 with the rank of Major.

Dr. Wick was a member of the Fifth District Dental Society, the American Dental Association,

the Fellowship in the Academy of General Dentistry, the Louisiana Dental Association, and the Phi Omega Dental Fraternity. He was a founding member of the Bernice Volunteer Fire Department and served as town councilman for Bernice for 24 years. An avid horseman, he held memberships in the Louisiana Quarter Horse Association, the American Hereford Association and the American Junior Quarter Horse Association. Dr. Wick was also involved with the Louisiana Farm Bureau, the Union Parish Farm Bureau, the Louisiana Forestry Association and the Louisiana Cattleman's Association.

Dr. Wick was also heavily involved and supportive of youth programs in Union Parish. As a former Boy Scout, he donated money and volunteered as a merit badge counselor to Troop 48 of Bernice and Troop 59 of Ruston. His generosity was also bestowed in time and money to the Ouachita Valley Council and the Thunderbird District. Dr. Wick strongly believed that every child who wanted an education should have one, and he provided financial assistance to many young people for college and business or technical school. He opened his office doors to dental graduates to work in his practice until they were secure enough to establish practices in neighboring towns.

Dr. Wick passed away in September of 1999 at the age of 87. He was a father and grandfather and was married to his wife Cortez for nearly 63 years. His life was rich, and he enriched the lives of others by the charitable giving of his time and money to so many community and youth organizations.

Dr. Wick deserves the honor of Congressional recognition, for his outstanding contributions to his family, our community and our state and I am proud to recognize his notable accomplishments and manifold contributions.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ROBERT DE LA VIÑA ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American and one of my constituents, Mr. Robert R. De la Viña. Mr. De la Viña's life has been one of dedication. Dedication to his country, his community, his family, and his faith. Born in Edinburg, Texas on April 9, 1914, Robert De la Viña made a name for himself early in his youth as a self taught musician and award winning trumpet soloist. After high school, Mr. De la Viña received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas A&I College in Kingsville, Texas in 1937. It was after this period, that he returned to the Rio Grande Valley and started his long career in public education.

After teaching five years, however, his career as an educator was interrupted by the call

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

of World War II. Mr. De la Viña was assigned to the United States Air Force and honorably served his country as a staff sergeant and mechanic for the B-26 Bomber. Later, he was assigned to B-29 squadrons participating in the Pacific Theater and was stationed in Guam and Tinian Island. After the war, he returned back to Edinburg and the familiar surroundings of the classroom. It was then soon after, Mr. De la Viña met and married a fellow educator, Miss Grace Watkins. From this loving marriage of 39 years, came one son and three grandsons.

Robert's dedication to the Edinburg public schools spans more than four decades. He served not only as a teacher, but as an Assistant Principal and Director of Special Services for the school district. After 37 years of commitment to the education and enrichment of the children from the Edinburg school district, he retired with numerous honors. Within a couple years of his retirement, Mr. De la Viña took his vision and passion for public education back to the community and ran for School Board Trustee. He served his community as Trustee for six years, giving a total of 43 years to the Edinburg School District and the community of Edinburg. His legacy and those of fellow De la Viña educators in South Texas, however, lives on, as March 23, 1986, marked the dedication of De la Viña Elementary School in Edinburg. On Robert's 85th birthday, the Mayor of Edinburg officially recognized his commitment to the city and people of Edinburg and proclaimed April 9, 1999: "Robert De la Viña Sr. Day."

Another phase of Robert De la Viña's life has been his devotion to his faith. Growing up in one of the founding family's of El Buen Pastor Methodist Church in Edinburg, Robert has helped the Church expand from the few families that assembled at his father's house to the hundreds that congregate today. Robert has actively participated in all phases of the Church's activities since his confirmation in 1926, such as Board Member, Choir and Youth Director and Sunday school teacher, a position he cherished for more than 30 years. Even to this day, Mr. De la Viña can be heard performing many of his original religious musical compositions on the piano at El Buen Pastor.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Robert R. De la Viña, as the oldest living member of a family that was designated a "Bicentennial Family" in 1976 by the American Historical Society, has touched the lives of so many people in South Texas. On April 9th of this year, Mr. De La Viña celebrated his 90th birthday. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing his dedication to public education and his decades of service to South Texas and this nation.

WALNUT CANYON STUDY ACT OF 2004

HON. RICK RENZI

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Walnut Canyon Study Act of 2004.

The Walnut Canyon National Monument was originally designated by Presidential proclamation on November 30, 1915, to protect Sinaguan cliff dwellings. Since the original

designation, the Walnut Canyon National Monument has been expanded to include 3,580 acres to protect additional ruins adjacent to the Monument.

In the past few years, several groups have proposed expanding the Monument with surrounding Forest Service land and designating this expanded area as a National Park. To further explore the options of the Walnut Canyon National Monument and potential inclusion of this expanded area, I have introduced the Walnut Canyon Study Act.

The Walnut Canyon Study Act of 2004 directs the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to jointly conduct a study on the management of certain land adjacent to the Walnut Canyon National Monument.

Coconino County and the City of Flagstaff have both passed resolutions supporting further review and study of the management options for the Walnut Canyon National Monument. In both resolutions, support for maintaining certain public uses in the Monument was relayed, as well as the need for the protection of the resources in the Monument.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides for public input into any recommendation that is forwarded by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture. Within the study, the legislation requires the Secretaries to look at the management objectives of the Forest Service and the National Park Service, as well as the opportunities for maintaining existing public uses, such as grazing, hunting and recreation. In addition, my version of this legislation ensures that any appropriation made available in this legislation will not affect the amounts made available for Forest Service or National Park Service activities in the State of Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Walnut Canyon Study Act of 2004. My intent in introducing this legislation is to help resolve the question of future management of the Walnut Canyon National Monument.

TRIBUTE TO FLOYD STEWART

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I pay tribute today to a close, personal friend of mine, Floyd Stewart. He is a man of great integrity and character, and I join today with family and friends in honoring his remarkable achievements throughout his life.

Floyd served admirably in the armed forces during WWII and fought on the front lines of our military for 11 months. He was stationed in Normandy and Luxembourg during this time and was a member of the Combat Engineers, Unit 148. He was also a soldier in the Battle of the Bulge, the largest land battle of World War II featuring over 500,000 Americans and over 80,000 casualties.

Throughout his time serving our nation, Floyd exhibited tremendous passion, pride, and a deep resolve to fight for the freedoms that we, as Americans, have been fortunate to experience. He continues to be respected member of his community and beloved member of his family. His kind and passionate spirit are an incredible resource and blessing to those who know him.

I have had the distinct privilege of enjoying Floyd Stewart's friendship for several years now. I have played golf with him at El Rancho Verde Golf Club, where he is a member, and seen firsthand his generosity of spirit and love for his fellow man.

It gives me no greater pleasure than joining today with family and friends in paying tribute to this great man. His unselfish duty to our country should not be overlooked. He is a symbol of all that we, as Americans, strive to be and I present to him today my steadfast thanks for his service.

IN RECOGNITION OF FALLEN SOLDIERS FOR SPECIAL MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, ninety years ago this month, President Woodrow Wilson stood in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and said of America's fallen soldiers: "We are expected to put the utmost energy, of every power that we have, into the service of our fellow men, never sparing ourselves, not condescending to think of what is going to happen to ourselves, but ready, if need be, to go to the utter length of self-sacrifice."

Today, American troops are again in harm's way risking their lives in defense of freedom and democracy. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we are confronting forces opposed to these values. They represent the darkness of oppression, fanaticism and fear. But America—led by its troops—will prevail. To those brave men and women who have given their lives in this pursuit, I join my colleagues in recognizing their noble sacrifice.

A TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF THE GRAND LEDGE ISLAND RESTORATION PROJECT FOR WINNING THE 2004 STATE OF MICHIGAN COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the community of Grand Ledge, Michigan for the successful completion of the Island Park Restoration Project. For the past five years, countless individuals and groups have persistently worked with patience and pride to restore the luster of the cultural, recreational, and economic gem nestled in the heart of Grand Ledge.

The Island Park is a 2.5-acre recreation facility in downtown Grand Ledge. It is an integral part of Grand Ledge's history and culture, and it serves as one of the city's main tourist attractions. Beginning in the 1870s, Grand Ledge was characterized as a charming summer resort town situated on the banks of the majestic Grand River. The principal attraction was the picturesque scenery, with intermingled cliff, river, and island views. As many as 12 trainloads of visitors from across the state would visit the city each day.

Today, the economics of tourism is just as important to Grand Ledge as it was over 125 years ago. An estimated \$1 million is generated annually for the community from events held at the Island Park, such as the Color Cruise & Island Festival, the Island Art Fair, and the Mudge's Follies variety show.

The Island Restoration Project began in earnest when the city received a Clean Michigan Initiative grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in 2001. Of the \$666,000 needed for the project, the state provided \$455,000 and Grand Ledge contributed \$211,000, including \$90,000 from community donations. The vast restoration, erosion control, and landscaping was done during the spring, summer, and fall of 2003. The work included adding pathways, new grass, new trees, decorative iron benches and lampposts, electrical and water conduits, gazebo restoration, and a viewing area with benches. The completed project is a culmination of five years of meticulous community planning, fantastic grant writing, creative fund raising, and extensive cooperation.

Grand Ledge Island Restoration Project Steering Committee members included Graydon Briggs, Karla Chamberlain, Rich Cissel, Steve Graszler, Susan Sasse, Tim Sattler, Kalmin Smith, Mike Stevens, Pete Stoughton, Mary Suurmeyer, Warren Wells, Cathy Wilhm, Don Willems, and Kay Wyszynski. These are extremely civic-minded individuals who also serve as members of the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Historical Society. City Administrator Jon Bayless and Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman Marv Hummel handled the day-to-day details and kept the project on track.

On behalf of the United States Congress, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to extend our highest praise and congratulations to the community of Grand Ledge, Michigan for restoring the Island Park for all to enjoy.

TRIBUTE TO DEPUTY MARSHAL DEVANIE AND DEPUTY SHERIFF SMITH

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, last week this Congress recognized the contributions and sacrifices made by law enforcement officers and we honored the fallen heroes during National Police Week. I rise today to remember two law enforcement officers from my district in Louisiana whose lives were lost in the line of duty in 2003.

The men and women of our police forces are the defenders of our families, our homes and our communities, and swear an oath to protect and serve so that we may live in peace and safety. Last week, law enforcement officers gathered with the families of officers killed in the line of duty to honor the commitment of our nation's police forces and to remember those they have lost.

Deputy Marshal Glen Devanie was responding to a call for backup from the Alexandria City Marshal's Office and was killed in an automobile accident. Deputy Sheriff Randy Smith was shot and killed while trying to apprehend a parish jail escapee in Mamou, Louisiana. The names of Deputy Marshal Devanie and Deputy Sheriff Smith were unveiled to their families and colleagues at the Candlelight Vigil at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. We will never adequately express our gratitude, and our sympathies, to the sacrifice of these two officers.

I wish to extend to the families of Deputy Marshal Devanie and Deputy Sheriff Smith my sympathies for their loss and the recognition of these two men as true heroes. I express to the men and women in law enforcement our profound gratitude, for their exhibitions of bravery and the sacrifices they are called to make. As these noble men and women sacrifice for a pledge to protect and to serve, it is our duty to honor them, past, present and future, to the highest degree.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PAULINE GONZALEZ

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor to stand before you to pay tribute to Pauline Gonzalez, a dedicated public servant, a loving wife and mother, and a role model for all. Pauline Gonzalez of Edinburg passed away on Monday, April 26, after a long illness. She will be remembered for her dedication to her family, her commitment to public service, and her passion for politics. She will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and colleagues.

Mrs. Gonzalez was born in Edinburg, Texas on March 16, 1927, to Francisco and Paula Garza. She was orphaned at a young age and was reared by her maternal grandmother, Gregoria Perez, her aunt, Segunda Perez, and her eldest sister, Hermencia. Her experiences as a young girl instilled the importance of family in her, and her commitment to those she loved never faltered.

In 1948, Mrs. Gonzalez married Jose Noe Gonzalez Sr. and together they had three children: Jose Noe Jr., Lucy, and Martha. Along with her dedication to family, Mrs. Gonzalez was a firm believer in the value of a good education. She attended Edinburg public schools, graduated from Edinburg High School, and despite the odds against her, pursued higher education at Edinburg Junior College. She instilled in her children the importance of education and it paid off. Her three children followed her example. Martha Salazar is Hidalgo County's purchasing agent, Lucy Canales is an Edinburg-based attorney, and Noe Gonzalez Jr. is a successful businessman.

Pauline began her career in 1945 as a deputy clerk for the Hidalgo County District Clerk's office. In 1960, after fifteen years of service, she left her position to devote more time to her family. She was very active with her church and many civic organizations, including

the Hospital Auxiliary, the Hidalgo County Historical Museum and the Freddy Gonzalez American Legion Post 408 Auxiliary.

In 1982, once her children were enrolled in college, she returned to the world of work and politics. Mrs. Gonzalez ran for and was elected District Clerk of Hidalgo County. Her victory made her one of the first women elected to office in the county. She broke through the barrier of a male dominated political world, but in her own special way. Her trademark high heels and lipstick were the perfect symbol for a woman whose elegance was not overshadowed by her ability to get things done. Her willingness to listen, her honesty and sincerity, and her commitment to her constituents to instill a confidence in their public officials, and she was solidly elected year after year. Mrs. Gonzalez's work ethic earned her the respect of her colleagues and the admiration of the people she dutifully served. She epitomized what every public servant should strive to be—accessible and willing to go the extra mile.

Above everything, it was Pauline's near perfect balance of determination and graciousness that made her a beloved member of her community. She was a dear friend, a lovely lady, and a devoted public servant who will be greatly missed by all. May she rest in peace.

COMPETITIVENESS AGENDA

HON. RICK RENZI

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, last week Republicans kicked off an eight-week Competitiveness Agenda by bringing legislation to the floor that addressed staggering health care costs faced by American businesses. This week, we voted to streamline the government compliance process and increase competitiveness in today's worldwide economy. By eliminating unnecessary government regulation, we took action, helping business owners across the nation to reduce countless hours and resources sacrificed to comply with unnecessary red tape.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses disproportionately bear the burden of government regulation costs. The U.S. Small Business Association estimates that in 2000, small businesses with 20 or fewer employees faced an annual regulatory burden of approximately \$6,975 per employee. That is almost two thirds more than the \$4,463 estimated for large firms. We also know that these small businesses are the Number One jobs creators in the United States accounting for 60 to 80 percent of new jobs. In other words, nearly 8 out of 10 jobs created in this economy come from the very business owners being strangled by regulation costs.

Common-sense regulatory reforms will help reduce costs to American businesses, allowing them to compete in the global market and bring careers to those bright Americans seeking them. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for voting to eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic red tape.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. CON.
RES. 995, CONCURRENT RESOLU-
TION ON THE BUDGET FOR FIS-
CAL YEAR 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

I rise in opposition to the Republican Budget Resolution conference report. For the first time since the Congressional Budget Act was enacted, the Republicans are bringing only a 1-year budget resolution to the floor. This 1-year conference agreement provides no plan to reduce the deficit and no commitment to provide critical resources for defense, homeland security, education, veterans, and other priorities in future years.

The budget agreement cuts funding for key priorities to help fund another round of Republican tax cuts totaling \$55.2 billion. After 3 years of the Bush administration's fiscal policies, we are facing a \$363 billion deficit in 2005, and that is before any new tax cuts or other policies the President is proposing. Republicans have managed to turn a projected \$5.6 trillion surplus into a projected \$3 trillion deficit.

This budget also fails to protect Social Security. The conference agreement not only fails to attempt to restore the budget surpluses to begin to protect the Social Security trust fund, but it also spends every penny of the \$1 trillion Social Security surplus over the next 5 years.

If that's not enough, the Republican budget shortchanges education and health programs. It provides \$81 billion for education and training programs, which is \$2.9 billion less than the Senate budget. The conference agreement provides \$8.8 billion less for education than was promised in the No Child Left Behind Act. It represents the smallest increase in education spending in 9 years, cutting \$1.4 billion in critical education programs, including those that improve family literacy, and provide school counselors to elementary school children.

It fails to provide any new money to help the 43 million Americans who are without health

insurance. There are over 12 million Hispanic Americans without health insurance and millions more who can barely pay their premiums, yet Republicans do nothing to hold costs down.

The budget cuts spending for mandatory health programs by \$905 million over 5 years. Medicaid constitutes over 90 percent of the dollars for these programs, so it is likely that disabled Americans, children and the elderly would bear the brunt of these spending cuts, if enacted. The budget also does nothing to hold down prescription drug costs. This administration and the Republican Party are failing the 2 million Hispanic seniors and all seniors on Medicare.

The budget cuts and underfunds critical housing programs. At this funding level, approximately 250,000 low-income families with children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities could lose their Section 8 vouchers.

The Republican budget leaves our veterans behind. The conference agreement provides only \$31 billion for appropriated veterans programs for 2005, which is \$1.3 billion less than the Veterans Affairs Committee, on a bipartisan basis, stated is needed for these vital veterans' health care programs. It shortchanges veterans' health care, raising health care costs for 1 million veterans. It makes it harder for veterans to get their disability, education, pension, housing, and employment benefits by eliminating critically needed staff that process claims for veterans' benefits. The Republicans talk about patriotism, yet how quickly they forget about the men and women who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, and the over 1 million Hispanic veterans.

The conference report before us is a failure of our fiscal and moral responsibility. We should reject this conference report and ask the conferees to go back to the drawing board.

I yield back the balance of my time.

TRIBUTE TO DENA SCHECHTER

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Mr. WAXMAN and I rise today to pay tribute to Dena

Schechter, a good friend and wonderful person. Dena is being honored by the University of Judaism (UJ) at its annual dinner on May 20, 2004, for her leadership in Jewish education and her many outstanding contributions to worthy causes.

The UJ is one of the leading institutions of higher education in our community. It maintains a proud tradition of academic excellence and a progressive viewpoint. Dena shares the University's intellectual and spiritual vision—maintaining Judaism's traditional beliefs and values in a way that is relevant to our increasingly complex and modern world.

In 1947, Dena's grandparents helped found the University. In the late 1950s, her grandparents endowed the University's first public lecture series. Throughout the years, Dena has continued her family's dedication and support for the UJ, serving on the Board of Directors and for the last five years as Chair. Under Dena's leadership the UJ's College of Arts and Science, the Ziegler School of Business and the Fingerhut School of Education have seen tremendous growth and development. Dena has helped underwrite an innovative community service component to the UJ's undergraduate curriculum. In addition, she helped establish the Sid Levine Service Learning Program—a feature in UJ's College of Arts and Sciences that emphasizes the critical nature of community service.

To know Dena is to be greatly blessed. She is the sister of our good friend and former colleague, Mel Levine and we feel extremely fortunate to know her personally. We are inspired by her belief that "participation in the community is not something you choose but something you are obligated to do." In addition to her contributions to the UJ, she actively works on behalf of the Federation Family and Jewish Family Services.

A native of Los Angeles and a graduate of UCLA with a degree in Philosophy, Dena successfully balances family, a career in business and a strong commitment to community service. She is married to Irving Schechter and is the mother of four.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, we ask you to join us in saluting Dena Schechter and congratulating her upon receiving this richly deserved honor.